

Public Testimony of Justin Haaheim
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy and Technology Committee
March 7, 2013
Concerning HB 6360, An Act Concerning Implementation of Connecticut's Comprehensive
Energy Strategy and Raised Bills 6533, 6535 and 6531.

Senator Duff, Representative Reed and members of the committee, my name is Justin Haaheim. I am the Connecticut Regional Coordinator for 350.org and a resident of New Haven, and I am speaking on Governor's Bill 6360 and Raised Bills 6533, 6535 and 6531.

I'm grateful to you all for the opportunity to speak on such an important bill at such a pivotal time for energy issues in our state, and I'm here to offer a bit of moral context for the conversation.

In recent years our state has taken praiseworthy steps toward soberly addressing the threats of the climate crisis we are in. The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2008 and indeed the creation of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection are two great examples. It's puzzling to me, then, that we would be meeting here today with the recent memory of back-to-back 100-year storms like Hurricanes Sandy and Irene and superstorm Nemo to say that our energy future for the next forty years will be based principally on natural gas, a fossil fuel whose net climate impact from extraction to combustion is on par with coal. That doesn't add up.

It doesn't add up in the way that barreling toward a 15-car pileup and choosing to change the radio station doesn't add up. We need to put on the brakes, but in so-doing we also have the opportunity to change our direction. When scientists are telling us that more extreme weather, sea-level rise, ocean acidification, mass drought and plenty of other things are just around the corner, investing \$6 billion in expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure cannot possibly be construed as a change in direction, much less the proposals to dilute the Renewable Portfolio Standard with trash incineration or Canadian Hydro.

A change in direction looks like investing in long-term contracts for renewables here in New England -- the energy sources that we know will be the centerpiece of our energy future forty years from now when we would have finally paid off the gas main expansions proposed. A change in direction looks like significantly scaling up the micro-grid pilot program that kicked off this year so that our energy future is one with energy security and reliability. A change in direction looks like making deep energy efficiency our first choice in all cases -- energy efficiency that strengthens our economy, saves consumers money and mitigates our impact on our ailing planet.

So I'm here today in solidarity with frontline communities in NY state, Pennsylvania and around the world who are bearing the burden of our fossil-fuel addiction to compel this body to reconsider this unprecedented investment in natural gas infrastructure and the uninspiring vision for our State's energy future it represents. The opportunity for a cleaner, more just, more economically stable energy future is before us. Will we take it?

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